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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- PERMANENT JOINT STUDY COMMISSION ON  
AGING AND MULTI-SECTOR PLAN ON AGING

Introduced By: Representative Lauren H. Carson

Date Introduced: April 03, 2026

Referred To: House Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Findings of fact.

2 The general assembly finds and declares:

3 (1) Rhode Island has one of the fastest growing populations of older adults, with  
4 approximately twenty-two percent (22%) of its residents sixty-five (65) years of age or older.

5 (2) The population of older Rhode Islanders is projected to grow substantially over the next  
6 decade, including significant increases among residents seventy-five (75) years of age and older  
7 and eighty-five (85) years of age and older.

8 (3) The aging process is influenced by historical and structural disparities including, but  
9 not limited to, racism, ageism, sexism, disability discrimination, and economic inequities.

10 (4) Growth in the older adult population will significantly impact housing systems,  
11 transportation networks, healthcare delivery, municipal services, and economic security programs.

12 (5) A coordinated, cross-sector strategic framework is necessary to prepare the state to meet  
13 these evolving needs.

14 SECTION 2. Title 40 of the General Laws entitled "HUMAN SERVICES" is hereby  
15 amended by adding thereto the following chapter:

16 [CHAPTER 23](#)

17 [PERMANENT JOINT STUDY COMMISSION ON AGING AND MULTI-SECTOR PLAN ON](#)

18 [AGING](#)

1           **40-23-1. Establishment.**

2           (a) There is hereby established a permanent house and senate joint study commission to be  
3 known as the “permanent joint legislative study commission on aging” (the “permanent  
4 commission”).

5           (b) The permanent commission shall guide, develop, and oversee the implementation of  
6 the Rhode Island multi-sector plan on aging.

7           **40-23-2. Membership.**

8           (a) The permanent commission shall consist of nineteen (19) members:

9           (1) Three (3) members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker, one of  
10 whom shall serve as co-chairperson;

11           (2) Three (3) members of the senate appointed by the president, one of whom shall serve  
12 as co-chairperson;

13           (3) The director of the office of healthy aging, or designee;

14           (4) The secretary of the executive office of health and human services, or designee;

15           (5) The director of the department of health, or designee;

16           (6) The secretary of housing, or designee;

17           (7) The director of the Rhode Island public transit authority, or designee;

18           (8) The chair of the state commission on aging, or designee;

19           (9) The chair of the long-term care coordinating council, or designee;

20           (10) The executive director of the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns, or designee;

21           (11) The executive director of the Senior Agenda Coalition of Rhode Island;

22           (12) One member who is a municipal senior center director appointed by the speaker;

23           (13) Three (3) public members jointly appointed by the speaker and the president who shall  
24 represent the aging or disabled community and possess lived experience or expertise in matters  
25 affecting older adults or persons with disabilities. At least one public member shall be sixty (60)  
26 years of age or older, and at least one public member shall be an adult with disabilities or a  
27 representative of a disability stakeholder organization.

28           (b) The three (3) public members shall collectively reflect a mix of residents from urban  
29 and rural communities within the state.

30           (c) Appointments shall seek representation of diverse racial, cultural, gender, and ability  
31 groups.

32           (d) Legislative members serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority. Public members  
33 serve staggered three (3) year terms.

34           (e) A majority of legislative members constitutes a quorum.

1 (f) The permanent commission shall have the authority to establish subcommittees  
2 appointed by the chairpersons, to further the implementation of this chapter. The permanent  
3 commission shall have the authority to appoint the chairpersons and the members to these  
4 subcommittees.

5 **40-23-3. Multi-sector plan on aging.**

6 (a) The permanent commission shall develop and periodically update a comprehensive  
7 multi-sector plan on aging (“MPA”) to serve as the general assembly’s coordinated long-term  
8 framework for addressing the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities.

9 (b) The MPA shall address, at a minimum, the following domains:

10 (1) Housing;

11 (2) Transportation;

12 (3) Access to services;

13 (4) Municipal services;

14 (5) Economic security; and

15 (6) Healthcare.

16 (c) The MPA shall include:

17 (1) An assessment of demographic trends and projected growth of older Rhode Islanders;

18 (2) Identification of disparities and structural barriers affecting aging outcomes;

19 (3) Broad goals and strategic priorities within each domain;

20 (4) Identification of opportunities for improved interagency coordination and collaboration  
21 with municipalities and community partners;

22 (5) Recommendations for legislative, regulatory, and budgetary actions necessary to  
23 advance the goals of the plan;

24 (6) Strategies to promote aging in place and strengthen home- and community-based  
25 services.

26 (d) The initial multi-sector plan shall be adopted within eighteen (18) months of enactment.

27 (e) The plan shall be updated no less than every four (4) years.

28 **40-23-4. Duties.**

29 The permanent commission shall:

30 (1) Encourage agencies at all levels of government to prioritize planning for older Rhode  
31 Islanders in strategic plans, capital planning, and program development;

32 (2) Facilitate joint policy development among state agencies and municipalities to promote  
33 innovation, efficiency, and effective use of public resources;

34 (3) Request information and implementation updates from relevant state agencies;

1           (4) Establish advisory subcommittees aligned with the domains identified in § 40-23-4 as  
2 necessary; and

3           (5) Conduct no fewer than four (4) public meetings annually.

4           **40-23-5. Annual report.**

5           (a) On or before January 15 of each year, the permanent commission shall submit a written  
6 report describing progress on the multi-sector plan on aging and recommendations for legislative  
7 or budgetary action to:

8           (1) The governor;

9           (2) The president of the senate;

10          (3) The speaker of the house of representatives;

11          (4) The chairperson of the senate committee on health and human services;

12          (5) The chairperson of the house committee on health and human services;

13          (6) The chairperson of the senate committee on finance;

14          (7) The chairperson of the house committee on finance;

15          (8) The chairperson of the senate committee on housing and municipal government; and

16          (9) The chairperson of the house committee on municipal government and housing.

17          (b) Executive branch agencies identified in the multi-sector plan shall, within ninety (90)  
18 days of issuance of the annual report, submit a written response outlining actions taken, planned  
19 actions, or reasons for non-implementation of recommendations relevant to their agency.

20          (c) The annual report and agency responses shall be made publicly available.

21          **40-23-6. Administrative and financial support.**

22          (a) The general assembly shall provide staff support. The office of healthy aging shall  
23 provide technical assistance upon request.

24          (b) The general assembly shall, upon approval by its membership, annually appropriate to  
25 the permanent commission the sum of one million dollars (\$1,000,000).

26          (c) Funding pursuant to this section shall provide for one full time employee at the  
27 executive office of health and human services to staff the commission.

28          **40-23-7. Permanency.**

29          The permanent commission shall be permanent and shall not sunset unless repealed by a  
30 subsequent act of the general assembly.

31          **40-23-8. Coordination of federal reporting with the Rhode Island multi-sector plan**  
32 **on aging.**

33          (a) The state unit on aging, currently the Rhode Island office of healthy aging (“OHA”),  
34 shall coordinate reporting required under the Older Americans Act (42 U.S.C. § 3001 et seq.) with

1 the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Rhode Island multi-sector plan on aging  
2 and the permanent commission.

3 (b) To the maximum extent practicable, data, analyses, and performance measures  
4 collected for federal reporting required under the Older Americans Act shall be used to inform and  
5 support the goals, strategies, and progress monitoring of the state's multi-sector plan on aging.

6 (c) The OHA shall ensure that information collected by state departments and service  
7 providers for federal reporting purposes is integrated into the planning, evaluation, and continuous  
8 improvement of the multi-sector plan on aging.

9 (d) The multi-sector plan on aging may incorporate, where appropriate:

10 (1) Performance indicators and service data reported pursuant to the Older Americans Act;

11 (2) Demographic and service utilization data from the state OHA;

12 (3) Measures related to health, housing, transportation, economic security, caregiving, and  
13 community supports affecting older adults and adults with disabilities; and

14 (4) Cross-agency data necessary to track progress toward statewide aging policy goals.

15 (e) Nothing in this section shall alter or diminish federal reporting obligations required to  
16 receive funding under the Older Americans Act, but shall ensure that such reporting is leveraged  
17 to support statewide strategic planning for Rhode Island's aging population.

18 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect on September 1, 2026.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES -- PERMANENT JOINT STUDY COMMISSION ON  
AGING AND MULTI-SECTOR PLAN ON AGING

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- 1           This act would establish the Permanent Joint Study Commission on Aging and Multi-
- 2   Sector Plan on Aging.
- 3           This act would take effect on September 1, 2026.

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